



Liz Lempert
Mayor

Princeton Named as Finalist in Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2018 Mayors Challenge

Princeton is among 35 Champion Cities That Will Embark on 6-month Testing Phase in Competition for Grand Prize

As Part of the American Cities Initiative, Challenge Will Invest \$17.5 Million in Grants and Technical Assistance to Discover Innovative Solutions to Urgent Local Issues

Princeton generated an idea to address food waste.

Princeton, NJ February 21, 2018 – Princeton is one of 35 Champion Cities selected today as finalists in the 2018 U.S. Mayors Challenge, a nationwide competition that encourages city leaders to uncover bold, inventive ideas that confront the toughest problems cities face. These 35 urban innovations rose to the top of a competitive pool of more than 320 applications. The Champion Cities will now begin a 6-month testing phase where they will conduct public prototypes of their ideas with grant funding of up to \$100,000 per city, a new addition to the Competition this year. The Mayors Challenge returns to the U.S. as the first investment in the American Cities Initiative, a \$200 million suite of new and expanded programs that will empower cities to generate innovation and advance policy that moves the nation forward.

Princeton now advances to the six-month “Test, Learn, and Adapt” phase of the competition. Cities will refine their ideas during this process with up to \$100,000, as well as personalized support from innovation experts, to test and begin building support for their urban innovations and submit a new application in August 2018. In October, four cities will receive \$1 million awards and one will receive a grand prize of \$5 million to bring their ideas to life.

"We received hundreds of bold and creative ideas from cities around the country in response to the 2018 Mayors Challenge, and these 35 really stood out for their potential to improve people's lives. The next six months are a great opportunity for the cities to test their ideas and make them even more innovative and effective," said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and three-term Mayor of New York City.

The 35 Champion Cities performed the best against four key criteria - vision, potential for impact, implementation plan, and potential to spread to other cities. A prestigious selection committee Co-Chaired by Former Ambassador Caroline Kennedy and Former Xerox Chairman & CEO Ursula Burns and comprising distinguished policy experts, artists, academics, business executives and social innovation leaders assessed the applications.

Princeton has proposed a plan to radically decrease its carbon footprint by reducing and recycling food waste, then using the resulting compost to sequester CO₂ in the soils of nearby farms. Almost 25% of Mercer County trash is food and organic waste which produces abundant methane when left to decompose in the landfill, and, so far, there is no proven or efficient strategy to fix this issue. The municipality of Princeton will use behavioral science to develop interventions to reduce food waste, and explore the feasibility of installing a local food digester to turn the waste into compost for local farms, keeping organics out of landfills and reducing methane gas emissions.

“I am thrilled to have our proposal recognized and supported by the Bloomberg Foundation,” said Princeton Mayor Liz Lempert. “Our idea has the potential to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hauling costs while at the same time enhancing the health and productivity of our local soils. The entire project team is excited to be part of the Champion Cities cohort, and we are looking forward to the friendly competition and inspiration from our fellow towns and cities.”

Municipal representatives worked together on the winning application with several community partners, including Sustainable Princeton, Princeton University, the Princeton School Gardens Cooperative, and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey.

The 2018 Mayors Challenge builds on the success of previous Bloomberg-sponsored Challenges in the U.S. (2013), Europe (2014), and Latin America and the Caribbean (2016). For more information, visit mayorchallenge.bloomberg.org and @BloombergCities on Twitter and Instagram.

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

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Media Contact

Bloomberg Philanthropies, Courtney Greenwald, (212) 205-0361, courtney@bloomberg.org